Alberta

News release

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Government boosts support to communities to help address growth pressures

New programs for infrastructure and community facilities

Budget highlights:

- *Municipal funding exceeds $1.9 billion in 2007-08, which includes $400 million in new funding through the new Municipal Sustainability Initiative*
- *$4.3 billion in support of municipal infrastructure over three years*
- *A new $280 million community facilities program*
- *More than $574 million invested in water and wastewater projects*

Edmonton... Increased funding to municipalities, a new community facilities grant program, and significant investment in water/wastewater facilities and other municipal capital feature prominently in Alberta's *Budget 2007*, with total spending exceeding $1.9 billion.

A total of $4.3 billion will be provided to municipalities over the next three years through infrastructure grants and other municipal support programs, with $1.4 billion provided in 2007-08.

"This is a significant investment," said Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Ray Danyluk. "It gives municipalities predictable and sustainable funding to tackle not only the pressures of growth, but to take advantage of the opportunities that growth brings."

First phase of new $1.4 billion for municipalities

Fulfilling Premier Ed Stelmach's commitment of providing municipalities $1.4 billion a year by 2010-11, the provincial budget provides a boost of $400 million to municipalities in 2007-08, including:

- **$125 million** for sustainable core infrastructure projects such as roads, transit and sewer.
- **$100 million** to address affordable housing pressures in high growth areas.
- **$75 million** for sustainable community infrastructure projects such as recreation facilities, libraries and arts facilities.
- **$50 million** for co-ordination incentives for co-operative capital projects involving two or more municipalities.
- **$50 million** for operating incentives to streamline services and increase efficiencies between municipalities.

New program for community infrastructure

A $429 million increase in infrastructure support over the next three years will help communities add, maintain and upgrade key community facilities, including:

- **$280** million over two years to establish a Major Community Facilities Program, funded by lotteries, to assist non-profit organizations, municipalities and Aboriginal communities with building, renovating, upgrading or maintaining major community public use facilities for sport, recreation, culture and wellness.
- **$80 million** for capital grants to support major athletic facilities, fairs and exhibitions.
- Funding to a maximum of **$69 million** for the province's commitment to provide 25 per cent of the cost of the Calgary Olympic Development Association's proposed $276 million capital renewal project.

"Quality of life is increasingly important to attracting and keeping people in Alberta," said Hector Goudreau, Minister of Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture. "In *Budget 2007*, we are adding and improving community facilities and programs that contribute to the quality of life for both long-time residents and new Albertans and their families."

This funding is part of an $819 million investment over three years in community facilities which also includes:

- the ongoing Community Facility Enhancement Program which provides matching grants of **$38.5 million** per year to support the expansion and upgrading of Alberta's extensive network of community-use facilities;
- **$192 million** over three years for expansion and renewal of the Royal Alberta Museum; and
- **$64 million** in funding for ongoing maintenance and upgrades to provincial parks, museums, archives and historic sites to improve the quality of life of all Albertans and promote the Alberta tourism experience.

Water and wastewater management

Budget 2007 also commits significant dollars to water/wastewater infrastructure with $574 million in funding over three years, including:

- **$170 million** for regional water and wastewater treatment projects throughout the province;
- **$148 million** in grants to municipalities under the *Water for Life* program;
- **$100 million** increase in funding through the Municipal Sustainability Initiative;

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- **$103 million** to complete water treatment plant and wastewater facilities in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo; and
- **$53 million** for irrigation rehabilitation grants.

"This funding will help municipalities manage their growth pressures and improve their residents' quality of life, which are two of Premier Ed Stelmach's five priorities for Alberta," said Infrastructure and Transportation Minister Luke Ouellette. "By providing the means to build water and wastewater facilities, we ensure municipalities continue to thrive in this province."

Budget 2007 supports Premier Ed Stelmach's plan to manage growth pressures, as well as government's priorities of governing with integrity and transparency, improving Albertans' quality of life, building a stronger Alberta, and providing safe and secure communities.

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